

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /068 W

-----231025Z 052552 /12

R 230853Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7495

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 4281

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS

SUMMARY: DURING CALL BY VISITING SOVIET CULTURAL MISSION MARCH 22, PRESIDENT MARCOS EXPRESSED HOPE THAT EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS BETWEEN MOSCOW AND MANILA COULD BE ACCELERATED. HE REITERATED HIS INVITATION FOR EITHER GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV OR PRESIDENT PODGORNYY TO VISIT THE PHILIPPINES. MARCOS' RHETORIC HARDLY SQUARES WITH LENGTHY HIATUS BETWEEN HIS JUNE 1976 STATE VISIT TO USSR AND OPENING OF EMBASSIES IN MANILA OR MOSCOW. GOP'S DILATORY POLICY SEEMS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A) LACK OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO MAN MOSCOW EMBASSY, B) ANXIETY WITHIN REGIME ABOUT GOP'S ABILITY COPE WITH SOVIET "DIPLOMATS," AND C) SOVIET HARD LINE ON PERSONNEL AND SEPARATE TRADE MISSION. LEISURELY PACE AT WHICH FULL NORMALIZATION HAS PROCEEDED SUGGESTS RELATIONS WITH USSR NOT ALL THAT HIGH A PRIORITY OF MARCOS REGIME. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING CALL BY VISITING SOVIET CULTURAL MISSION MARCH 22, PRESIDENT MARCOS EXPRESSED HOPE EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS BETWEEN MANILA AND MOSCOW COULD BE ACCELERATED. PRESIDENT ALSO REITERATED HIS INVITATION FOR EITHER GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV OR PRESIDENT PODGORNYY TO VISIT PHILIPPINES. MEETING WITH VISITING SOVIETS FRONT PAGED IN

ALL MANILA DAILIES MARCH 23.

2. SOVIET DELGATION INCLUDED VALDIMIR POPOV, DEPUTY MINISTER OF CULTURE, VLADIMIR TOLSTIKOV, COUNSLOR OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIETIES FOR FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL RELATIONS, AND VLADIMIR ALEXANDROV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF FOREIGN RELATIONS MINISTRY OF CULTURE. THEY WERE GUESTS OF PHILIPPINE SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WHICH IS HEADED BY LABOR SECRETARY BLAS OPLE. DURING SIX-DAY VISIT (MARCH 17-22) WHICH SEEMED PRIMARILY DEVOTED TO SIGHTSEEING AND INNERS, DELEGATION AND RP-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY SIGNED NEW "CULTURAL AGREEMENT." QUERIED ABOUT AGREEMENT MARCH 22, SOURCE IN DFA'S POLITICAL DIVISION SAID DFA KNEW NOTHING ABOUT AGREEMENT AND EMPHASIZED IT WAS STRICTLY A MATTER BETWEEN THE TWO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES.

3. ACCOMPANYING VISITING SOVIETS ON CALL ON PRESIDENT WERE LOCAL PRAVADA CORRESPONDENT OZEROV AND THE MANILA FIL-SOV REPRESENTATIVE. ALSO PRESENT WAS FORMER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SALVADOR P. LOPEZ (VP OF RP-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY), WHO AT ONE TIME WAS MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE FIRST FILIPINO AMBASSADOR TO SOVIET UNION. BEGIN FYI - LOPEZ HAS BEEN OUT-SPOKEN CRITIC OF MARTIAL LAW REGIME AND HIS APPOINTMENT MOST UNLIKELY. END FYI.

4. IN HIS DAILY EXPRESS COLUMN MARCH 23, TEODORO VALENCIA (WHO USUALLY REFLECTS VIEWS OF REGIME) REPORTED "GOOD NEWS FROM MOSCOW." RUSSIANS HAVE "AGREED TO ALL THE PHILIPPINES REQUESTS." VALENCIA SAID AN EMBASSY AND RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS AWAIT THE FIRST FILIPINO AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW. CONFIDENTIAL

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VALENCIA CLAIMS THAT USSR EMBASSY IN MANILA, "CONTRARY TO SOME EARLIER IMPRESSIONS," WILL NOT HAVE MORE PERSONNEL THAN THE PRC EMBASSY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 4281

5. TIMES JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT TANEDO IN HIS MARCH 23 COLUMN COMMENTS THAT SOVIET CULTURAL MISSION INDICATES "FILIPINOS AND RUSSIANS ARE READY TO FORMALIZE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BEYOND THE COMMITMENTS OF A JOINT COMMUNIQUE. AFTER ALMOST A YEAR, THE WISDOM OF PUTTING UP EMBASSIES HAS BECOME APPARENT." TANEDO QUOTES DEPUTY MINISTER POPOV AS SAYING, "WE ARE NOT HERE JUST TO DISCUSS CULTURAL MATTERS. ALTHOUGH I AM NOT A DIPLOMAT, I WILL TAKE UP WITH YOUR PRESIDENT THE MATTER OF ESTABLISHING AN EMBASSY IN MANILA." TANEDO THEN CITES REASONS WHICH HAVE PREVENTED EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS, INCLUDING NUMBER OF SOVIET PERSONNEL AND REQUEST FOR SEPARATE TRADE MISSION.

6. DFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AMBASSADOR MANALO TOLD EMOBFFS IN EARLY MARCH QUESTION OF SEPARATE RUSSIAN TRADE MISSION STILL HAD TO BE SOLVED. ALLUDING TO PROBLEM OF NUMBERS IN SOVIET MISSION HE EMPHASIZED GOP DESIRE NOT TO OFFEND PRC BY ALLOWING MORE CONFIDENTIAL

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RUSSIANS THAN CHINESE. MANALO ALSO ADMITTED THAT ABSENCE OF RUSSIAN LANGUAGE OFFICERS COMPLICATED OPENING EMBASSY IN MOSCOW. BEGIN FYI - DFA SOURCES TELL US GOP HAS APPROVED VISAS FOR TWO MEMBERS OF SOVIET ADVANCE PARTY, INCLUDING VALERI V. MALYGIN, WHO WILL REPORTEDLY BE FIRST SOVIET CHARGE. ADVANCE PARTY IS NOW EXPECTED IN APRIL. END FYI.

7. COMMENT: MARCOS' CLAIM THAT HE WANT ACCELERATED EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS AND REITERATION OF INVITATION TO PRODGORNY OF BREZHNEV SEEM RATHER TRANSPARENT EFFORT TO CREATE IMPRESSION THAT IT IS NOT THE GOP WHICH HAS BEEN SLOW ON SETTING UP EMBASSIES, BUT RATHER THE RUSSIANS. FROM WHAT WE KNOW, HOWEVER, EXACT OPPOSITE HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH THE FILIPINOS DRAGGING THEIR FEET MUCH TO

MOSCOW'S CHAGRIN. FILIPINO RELUCTANCE TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY ON FULL NORMALIZATION IS ATTRIBUTABLE IN PART TO ABSENCE OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO MAN MOSCOW MISSION, BUT ALSO TO APPREHENSIONS WITHIN GOP, PARTICULARLY IN THE INTELLIGENCE ESTABLISHMENT, ABOUT GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO MONITOR SOVIET DIPLOMATS WHEN THEY FINALLY GET HERE. APPARENT SOVIET HARD LINE ON SEPARATE TRADE MISSION, NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, ETC. MAY ALSO HAVE IRRITATED FILIPINOS. IN ANY EVENT LEISURELY PACE AT WHICH NORMALIZATION HAS PROCEED SUGGESTS THAT DESPIRE MARCOS RHETORIC, RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION NOT ALL THAT HIGH A PRIORITY OF HIS REGIME.  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
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